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Nintendo

CAMPUS CHALLENGE 1991

Reproduction Cartridge

INSTRUCTION BOOKLET

This official seal is your assurance that Nintendo has not reviewed this product. They might even be unhappy about it being made. Always look for this seal when buying games, even though anyone with a scanner or paint program could easily reproduce it.

Introduction

Thank you for selecting the Nintendo Campus Challenge 1991 Reproduction Cart.

Please read this instruction booklet to ensure maximum enjoyment of your new game. Be sure to save this booklet for future reference.

OBJECT OF THE GAME/GAME DESCRIPTION

In 1991 Nintendo created another nationwide contest after the success of the 1990 NWC. This time the event travelled to around 60 college campuses where thousands of students battled for a chance to compete for the next Nintendo World Champion title.

To compete, gamers had to grab twenty five coins in Super Mario Bros. 3, get 100,000 points in Pin Bot, and reach the highest score they could in Dr. Mario, all before time ran out. At the event, all three games were combined into a special cartridge made specifically for the NCC. Almost all of these cartridges were destroyed and now only one is known to exist. Not publically played in 17 years, now you can experience the thrill of the competition in your own home with the Nintendo Campus Challenge 1991 Reproduction Cartridge!

Using the Ciclone

The NCC 1991 cart includes the Ciclone multi-region lock out chip. Plug in the cart and turn on the NES. If your system is blinking but shows video try pressing the reset button. This will tell the Ciclone to try the next region. When the correct region is found it will be saved so this process should only be needed once. If you have hit reset 8 times and it is still blinking your 72 pin connector inside the NES may need to be cleaned or replaced. Blowing on the cart will add condensation that may damage the cart.

Controls

To start the game, press the Start button on Controller 2, not Controller 1. In the original competition this was a safeguard in place to make sure all competitors started and ended at the same time. There was a central computer connected to all NES systems that simulated this button press. If you have a Zapper plugged into port 2 you will skip the title screen and go directly to the game start. Once started the games are played via Controller 1. None of the games can be paused. Once started, you must play the game through to its end! Neither the Start nor Select buttons on Controller 1 are used for any of the games. When the game is finished, you must completely turn off your NES console before playing again.

The NCC cart includes a few hidden features. The first is a timer used for debugging. Hold the A button on Controller 2 when you start your system to see the contest timer count up. No games are played. Next are cheats to skip games. Hold the B button on Controller 2 when you start your system to start on Pin Bot, or hold the Select button to start on Dr. Mario. Finally there is name entry, used for displaying scores on a central computer. Instead of hitting Start, hit Select to go to this screen. You can enter your six character name then press Start to begin normally. Without the central computer this name is not displayed so it is not useful.

Timing

The original competition was played for 6 minutes 21 seconds. Your NCC cart has a set of DIP switches to configure the time. Look up how long you would like to play, then move the 4 switches left or right according to the chart:

5:04	5:24	5:42	6:00	**6:21**	6:38	6:57	7:16	7:34	7:53	8:12	8:31	8:49	9:08	9:25	9:46
L	R	L	R	**L**	R	L	R	L	R	L	R	L	R	L	R
L	L	R	R	**L**	L	R	R	L	L	R	R	L	L	R	R
L	L	L	L	**R**	R	R	R	L	L	L	L	R	R	R	R
L	L	L	L	**L**	L	L	L	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R

Super Mario Bros. 3

The controls for Mario match the standalone cartridge. Mario will have 99 lives, unlike the standalone version. You can die from running out of time. The NCC cart timer will run out before it is possible to beat SMB3.

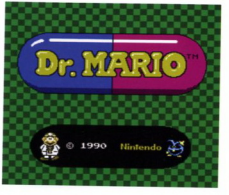
A button..... Mario jumps, swims.
B button..... Mario runs (when used with Left or Right), uses special items.
Left and Right..... Moves Mario left and right.

Pin Bot

The controls for Pin Bot are the same as the standalone version. You get as many balls as you want, but the delay between them is a waste of valuable time.

A button..... Moves the right flipper.
B button..... Pulls the plunger.
D Pad..... Any direction moves the left flipper
Select..... Bumps the machine to the right
Start..... Bumps the machine to the left

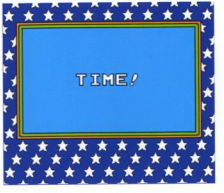
Dr. Mario



The controls for Dr. Mario match the standalone cartridge. Your game will always start on level 0, medium difficulty. This means beginning play will be slow so clearing levels quickly is important.

A button..... Rotates vitamin capsule 90 degrees clockwise.
B button..... Rotates vitamin capsule 90 degrees counter-clockwise.
Left and Right..... Moves vitamin capsule left and right.
Down..... Drops vitamin capsule quickly.

Scoring



When the time runs out, the game ends and your score is displayed. This is calculated by multiplying your Super Mario Bros. 3 score by ten, multiplying your Pin Bot score by one, and multiplying your Dr. Mario score by one hundred. The three products are then added together for your final score. The highest score yet recorded is shown above. Scores as low as 1,500,000 were enough to win some colleges. 2,100,00 was considered good.

During the 1990 NWC competition some gamers spent all their time in SMB and never reached the other games. A rule was created part way through which said all games must be played. For the 1991 NCC competition the same rule was enacted from the start. You must at least reach the Dr. Mario gameplay, not just the intro screen. This may be a useful rule to enforce when competing among friends with your cartridge!

Tips from NCC Champ Steven Lucas

It was Steven Lucas who defeated 56 other contestants in the final Nintendo Campus Challenge event. Unlike the NWC, the championship round was not close, with Lucas winning by around one million points. His semi-final round score is also the highest recorded score so far. His technique involved scoring big on Super Mario Bros. 3, speeding through Pin Bot, and barely making it to Dr. Mario before time ran out. Most other high scorers used the same plan.

First get through World 1-1 while picking up 24 coins and the raccoon tail. In World 1-2 head to the second Goomba dispenser, where they come out overhead. Wait for at least 3 to pop out then start the chain. Hop on the first one, float with the raccoon tail, hop on the next one, and repeat until the score hits 8000. Then touch the ground and start again. Extra lives are not worth any points. If you can bat one in the air before hitting the one for 8000 points, you get an extra 8000. Keep killing Goombas until you have just enough time to get one more coin, make it through Pin Bot, and start Dr. Mario. This will take some practice to find out how much time you need. With the multiplier each sequence gets you 165,000 points. Successfully completing it 11 times gets you into the 2M points range.

Other competitors were able to win at the college level with points mainly from Dr. Mario, but this was not enough in the finals. By chaining together multiple viruses very large scores quickly add up. The 100x multiplier is tempting but the low starting level and speed make the time just too short to beat the various SMB 3 tricks.

History of the NCC Board

The Nintendo Campus Challenge contest cartridge was found by jollerancher of www.digitpress.com in May of 2006. Through a garage sale he came in contact with a former event promoter who worked on most of the Nintendo contests. A massive treasure trove of contest carts, prototypes, and other materials was found. Among them was a curious cart with a phone jack, which led some to think it was a prototype modem. When powered up the NWC 1990 title screen was shown, suggesting it was an NWC prototype. Finally when the cart was played the game list confirmed it was the only known remaining Nintendo Campus Challenge cart.

The cart was later sold to its current owner for $4800. It has not been publically played since January 1992, but has made many "most expensive" game lists. It is not likely to be sold by the current owner.

The board is much more complicated than the NWC board but shares many similarities. All the code for each game is combined into one EPROM chip, with a white sticker on the right. The graphics for all games are also combined into one EPROM with the white sticker on the left. The graphics chip is labeled NWC which fueled the prototype debate. The NCC includes the same timer and DIP switches as the NWC, so the contest time can be set the same. The MMC3 mapper is used as a base instead of the much more simple (and cheaper) MMC1 of the NWC.

History of the NCC Board (cont)

The NCC cart is not a prototype. The final board was designed to be larger than the plastic cart and only around 20 we ever made. No gold or numbered gray carts were produced or distributed like the NWC. Winners never had the option to receive a cart, and there was no Nintendo Power contest to win one. The systems were completely enclosed in the stage so gamers never even saw the carts. So far only one cart has been discovered and most were known to have been physically destroyed when the contest ended. Three or four may have survived, and only one has been found so far.

The original board was sent by the current owner to the labs at the RetroZone. Once reverse engineered the DIP switch settings were corrected to show the Campus Challenge title screen instead of the NWC title screen. One unused DIP setting appears to crash the cart, however it may be just waiting for some input from the phone jack. Those two switches are not included in the reproduction cartridge.

This cart displays the original Nintendo Campus Challenge logo if you hold the down button on controller 2 when you start your system. After the title screen is shown you can stop holding the button.

The phone jack was also determined to be a network connection for transmitting player scores and names to a central computer. Those scores were displayed on a large screen behind the contestants for faster results reporting. The exact protocol used has not yet been reverse engineered, and this reproduction cart does not include the phone port. Without the central computer it isn't useful.

NCC 1991 vs 1992

The NCC logo is correct; the Nintendo Campus Challenge for NES was in 1991 and not 1992. There has been much confusion about the year and games played because along the way it was forgotten that there were actually two different Campus Challenge contests in two years. One used this NES cartridge and the other used a separate SNES cart with Super Mario World, F Zero, and Pilotwings.

The NES NCC contest had a test market visiting colleges in early December of 1990. This was at the same time as the much more advertised NWC finals were taking place. Most of the colleges were visited during the 1991 school year, taking a break during June and July. Other locations like spring break at Daytona Beach, FL were also used. The final competition took place January 4-5, 1992. Instead of Universal Studios where the NWC finals were, the NCC moved to Orlando, FL to visit Walt Disney World. The winner, Steven Lucas, was crowned the National Champion for 1991. His trophy confirms the year. He was also supposed to battle against the Australian National Champion for the Open Challenge, but the Australian was a no show for the rehearsal and it never happened. Jollerancher may have found the trophy intended for that as well.

Another Campus Challenge was run during 1992. Colleges early in the schedule used the same NES cart, but this was quickly switched for the SNES cart. Students in those NES colleges were not invited to the SNES finals. Jeff Hansen won that competition, taking over the National Champion title. Later he would battle the Japanese National Champion, Yuichi Suyama, and win to claim the 1993 World Nintendo Champion title. Hansen was also the NWC 11 And Under winner. NES and SNES competition cartridges were never used at the same contest.

Thor Aackerlund's NWC age group trophy says "Nintendo World Champion" and did not mention National Champion, so it appears usage of that title did not begin until 1991.

NCC Schedule

According to the prospectus for creating the contest, the original plan for the games included Rad Racer. This was likely changed to Pin Bot because Rad Racer had already been used and needed different hardware. Pin Bot was another game Nintendo could promote and would need fewer changes. The prospectus also lists the proposed college schedule. This should not be considered an accurate list of where the event actually went:

1990			4/22-23	Ohio State Univ	Columbus
11/29-30	Louisiana State	Baton Rouge	4/24	Chevy Open House	GM Tech Center
12/3-4	Texas A&M	College Station	4/25-26	Univ of Michigan	Ann Arbor
12/6-7	Oklahoma	Norman	4/29-30	Indiana Univ	Bloomington
			5/2-3	Univ of Wisconsin	Madison
1991			5/6-7	Univ of Minnesota	Minneapolis
1/10-13	CES	Las Vegas	5/9-10	Northwestern Univ	Evanston
1/15-16	Cal Poly SLO	San Luis Obispo	8/2-13	Ohio State Fair	Columbus
1/17-18	UC Santa Barbara	Santa Barbara	8/15-20	Illinois State Fair	Springfield
1/21-22	UCLA	Los Angeles	8/22-9/20	Canada Tour	Canada
1/24-25	USC	Los Angeles	9/23-24	State Univ of New York	Albany
1/28-29	CSU	Long Beach	9/26-27	Univ of Massachusetts	Amherst
1/31-2/1	UC Irvine	Irvine	9/30-10/1	Boston Univ	Boston
2/4-5	Cal State Fullerton	Fullerton	10/3-4	Univ of Rhode Island	Kingston
2/7-8	San Diego State Univ	San Diego	10/7-8	New York Univ	New York
2/11-12	UNLV	Las Vegas	10/10-11	Rutgers Univ	New Brunswick
2/14-15	Arizona State Univ	Tempe	10/14-15	Univ of Pennsylvania	Philadelphia
2/18-19	Univ of Arizona	Tucson	10/17-18	Univ of Maryland	College Park
2/21-22	Univ of New Mexico	Albuquerque	10/21-22	Georgetown Univ	Washington DC
2/25-26	Texas Tech Univ	Lubbock	10/24-25	Univ of North Carolina	Chapel Hill
2/28-3/1	Univ of Texas	Arlington	10/28-29	Clemson Univ	Clemson
3/4-5	Univ of Texas	Austin	11/11-12	Univ of Washington	Seattle
3/7-8	Univ of Houston	Houston	11/13	Nintendo Open House	U of Washington
3/11-15	Spring Break	South Padre	11/18-19	Univ of Oregon	Eugene
3/19-22	Spring Break	Daytona Beach	11/27-28	Cal State Sacramento	Sacramento
3/25-29	Spring Break	Daytona Beach	12/2-3	UC Berkeley	Berkeley
4/4-5	Univ of Georgia	Athens	12/5-6	Stanford Univ	Stanford
4/8-9	GIT	Atlanta	12/9-10	San Jose State Univ	San Jose
4/11-12	Auburn Univ	Auburn			
4/15-16	Univ of Alabama	Tuscaloosa	1992		
4/18-19	Univ of Tennessee	Knoxville	1/4-5	Walt Disney World	Orlando

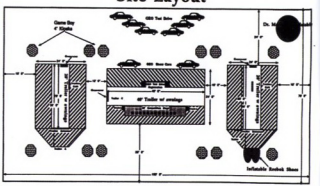
NCC College Events

The Nintendo Campus Challenge travelled to around 60 colleges and other events. Each one was an advertisement and product demonstration for Nintendo and Chevrolet. Three huge trailers were driven to the college and unfolded to become the event stages. One stage was the main contest area with 12 stations. The others held 64 NES systems with games like Tetris and NES Play Action Football. Additional standalone Game Boy kiosks and a Geo test drive section were added around the NES stations.

At the college any students could play. Scores from each round were recorded and the highest players came back for a final round. Whoever won that went to Florida, with the others claiming small cash prizes. There were no preliminary elimination rounds and gamers could play as many times as they wanted before the finals. Sometimes the event was cut short from bad weather and the top score so far won.

Once the contest ended the students were paid to pack up the trucks, which were then driven to the next location. Frequently there was only a day or two until the next college was scheduled.

Nintendo Campus Challenge Site Layout



NWC Finals

The Campus Challenge finals took place at Disney World during New Year's weekend in January 1992. 57 competitors made the trip and spent the weekend at the resort, all paid for by Nintendo. Some vacationed in the Disney parks while others brought their NES and got some last minute practice time in. During practice rounds on stage all competitors could see what the others were doing, so there were no secrets. Everyone had to choose to target SMB 3 or Dr. Mario for points.

It was a cold winter day in Florida and the competitors had to play outside on the stage. All 57 competitors battled in the first round. For most their contest ended right there. The second round included only the top 12 scores. In the third round of 6 gamers the highest score yet recorded was posted, as seen on the back of the NCC box. The final round was just 2 as Steven Lucas easily won with a score of 2,394,130 beating Matt Sekelsky. He won a Geo Storm GSi (with more than double the horsepower of the NWC Geo Metro!) and the others got cash or small prizes. The Storm is still in his garage after needing major rust repairs.